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SIPDIS

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DEPT. FOR EUR/WE (MENNUUTI); EUR/SE; EUR/ERA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PREL PINS EU PGOV PREL PINS EU PGOV PREL PINS EU PGOV VT VTPHUM VTPHUM

SUBJECT: THE HOLY SEE AND THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION:

COUNTERING SECULARISM, NOT TURKEY'S EUROPEAN AMBITIONS

REF: A) VATICAN 0180, B) PARIS 8042

SUMMARY

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1. (SBU) ALTHOUGH THE HOLY SEE IS PRESSING HARD FOR THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE CONTINENT'S CHRISTIAN HERITAGE, THIS DRIVE IS IN NO WAY INTENDED TO SUGGEST HOLY SEE OPPOSITION TO TURKEY'S EU MEMBERSHIP. ON THE CONTRARY, THIS EFFORT PREDATES THE CURRENT DEBATE OVER TURKEY, AND THE HOLY SEE SPECIFICALLY FAVORS CONSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE THAT WOULD ENSURE FREEDOM OF WORSHIP TO ALL FAITHS. IN PUSHING FOR A "CHRISTIAN HERITAGE" REFERENCE AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO RELIGION, THE HOLY SEE IS SEEKING A FOUNDATION ON WHICH TO COUNTER THE INCREASINGLY DOMINANT SECULARISM WITHIN EUROPE AND TO REINVIGORATE THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN EUROPEAN CULTURE. THE HOLY SEE IN NO WAY SEEKS TO EXCLUDE OTHER FAITHS OR PHILOSOPHIES, AND HAS TOLD US DIRECTLY THEY HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH A PREDOMINANTLY ISLAMIC STATE SUCH AS TURKEY BEING A MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION -- A DECISION IN WHICH THEY HAVE NO DIRECT ROLE. END SUMMARY.

EUROPE'S CHRISTIAN ROOTS IN ARID SOIL

2. (U) THE HOLY SEE IS PRESSING EUROPEANS HARD TO ENSURE THAT THE PROPOSED EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION INCLUDES A REFERENCE TO THE CONTINENT'S CHRISTIAN HERITAGE, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME MAKING CLEAR THAT JURIDICAL PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE TO PROTECT ALL RELIGIOUS FAITHS. FROM THE POPE ON DOWN, THE HOLY SEE HAS BEEN LOBBYING EUROPEAN POLICY MAKERS ACTIVELY IN RECENT MONTHS. ACCORDING TO THE POPE, "CHRISTIANITY IS A CENTRAL AND INHERENT ELEMENT" OF THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY, AND
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"THE CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMED THE CULTURE OF THE CONTINENT." FRAMING THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE HOLY SEE'S CURRENT FOCUS ON THE EU CONSTITUTION, THE POPE TOLD THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN HIS ANNUAL ADDRESS LAST JANUARY (REF A) THAT "THE MARGINALIZATION OF RELIGIONS, WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED AND CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CULTURE AND HUMANITY OF WHICH EUROPE IS LEGITIMATELY PROUD, STRIKES ME BOTH AS AN INJUSTICE AND AN ERROR IN PERSPECTIVE." REFERRING TO THE HOLY SEE'S DESIRE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION, HE ADDED: "TO RECOGNIZE AN INDISPUTABLE HISTORICAL FACT IN NO WAY MEANS TO DISREGARD THE MODERN DEMAND OF STATES TO HAVE AN APPROPRIATE NON-CONFESSIONAL CHARACTER."

3. (U) THIS FALL, THE HOLY SEE HAS INTENSIFIED ITS OUTREACH TO EU COUNTRIES WHEN IT CALLED IN ALL EUROPEAN AMBASSADORS TO OUTLINE ITS PRIORITIES FOR THE FINAL CONSTITUTION. THESE PRIORITIES ENCOMPASS REFERENCES TO FIVE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES: CENTRALITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON, RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, SOLIDARITY (THE SEARCH FOR THE COMMON GOOD), SUBSIDIARITY AND PARTICIPATION, AND THE SHARING OF RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN THE CHURCHES AND THE EU.

4. (U) IN ADDITION, THE HOLY SEE IS ALSO SEEKING JURIDICAL RECOGNITION OF THE CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE CONSTITUTION. THEY NOTE THAT RELIGION, CHURCHES, AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY EU LEGISLATION FOR DECADES, BUT THAT THERE ARE NO REFERENCES TO RELIGIONS IN THE TREATY PROVISIONS OR ANNEXED PROTOCOLS. THEY POINT OUT THAT ISSUES SUCH AS NON-DISCRIMINATION, LABOR LAW, DATA PROTECTION, CULTURE, MEDIA LAW, CUSTOMS, FINANCES AND OTHER AREAS ALL IMPACT ON THE CHURCH, AND THAT THE ABSENCE OF
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JURIDICAL REFERENCES TO THEM WOULD CONSTITUTE A SERIOUS VACUUM. CONSEQUENTLY, THE HOLY SEE IS SEEKING THROUGH THE COMMISSION OF EPISCOPATES OF THE EU A PROVISION ASSURING THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION OF CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS

COMMUNITIES IN THEIR TEACHING AND ORGANIZATION. THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM OR CORPORATIVE SELF-DETERMINATION IS GUARANTEED BY ARTICLE 10 OF THE CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EU OR ARTICLE 9 OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. FINALLY, THE HOLY SEE WOULD LIKE TO INCLUDE A PROVISION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE AND CONSULTATION SPECIFICALLY RELATING TO THE ROLE OF CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES.

15. (U) HAVING OUTLINED ITS GOALS, THE POPE HAS USED EVERY OPPORTUNITY THIS FALL TO PRESS HIS CASE. IN HIS MEETINGS WITH EU AMBASSADOR'S HE HAS REPEATED HIS INSISTENCE THAT EUROPE MUST BE FOUNDED ON "COMMON VALUES, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CHRISTIAN ROOTS OF THE DIFFERENT PEOPLE" WHO LIVE ON THE CONTINENT. LIKEWISE, THE POPE'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION, VALERIE GISCARD D'ESTAING, FOCUSED ON THE CONCERNS OF EUROPE'S CHRISTIAN MAJORITY "TO SEE THEIR IDENTITY AND THEIR SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE LIFE OF EUROPEAN SOCIETY RESPECTED" AND TO HAVE THE STATUS THEY ENJOY IN CERTAIN NATIONAL

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DS-00 FBIE-00 UTE-00 VC-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 LAB-01
VCE-00 NSAE-00 PER-00 TEST-00 EPAA-00 DSCC-00 PRM-00
DRL-02 SAS-00 /003W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

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CONSTITUTIONS REFLECTED IN THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION. MOST RECENTLY, IN THE FIRST EVER PAPAL ADDRESS TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT NOVEMBER 14, JOHN PAUL II CALLED FOR EUROPE TO "OPEN ONCE AGAIN YOUR DOORS TO CHRIST." WHILE

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STRESSING THE CONTINENT'S RELIGIOUS PATRIMONY (READ CHRISTIANITY), WHICH HAS "GIVEN EUROPE ITS GREATNESS DOWN THE CENTURIES," THE PONTIFF ALSO SUPPORTED PROVIDING ROOM FOR THE "RICHNESS AND DIVERSITY OF THE CULTURES AND TRADITIONS WHICH CHARACTERIZE INDIVIDUAL NATIONS (I.E. OTHER RELIGIONS)."

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE AS SEEN FROM THE CURIA

16. (SBU) VATICAN DIRECTOR FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS MSGR. ETTORE BALESTRERO EXPANDED ON THE HOLY SEE'S VIEWS IN A NOVEMBER 18 MEETING WITH POLOFF. BALESTRERO ESTIMATED THAT ON A CONTINENT OF ROUGHLY 700 MILLION PEOPLE, ABOUT 500 MILLION WERE CHRISTIAN. (NOTE: THE VATICAN'S STATISTICAL YEARBOOK OF THE CHURCH COUNTS 702 MILLION POPULATION IN EUROPE WHICH INCLUDES ALL OF THE OSCE COUNTRIES EXCEPT THE U.S., CANADA AND TURKEY. END NOTE.) FURTHERMORE, BALESTRERO RECALLED, CHRISTIANITY, UNLIKE OTHER FAITHS, WAS THE COMMON ELEMENT THAT BOUND THE CLASSIC EUROPEAN CIVILIZATIONS OF GREECE AND ROME TO MODERN EUROPE. IT WAS CHRISTIAN MONKS WHO HAD PRESERVED EUROPE'S KNOWLEDGE, AND JUDEO-CHRISTIAN ETHICS THAT INFORM MODERN NOTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE. THE HOLY SEE WAS SIMPLY SEEKING TO ENSURE THAT EUROPE'S CONSTITUTION RECOGNIZES THIS "REALITY" -- BUT WITHOUT ANY NORMATIVE OR OPERATIONAL CONSEQUENCES. BALESTRERO SAID THE HOLY SEE STILL SUPPORTS LANGUAGE IN A EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION GUARANTEEING FREEDOM OF RELIGION, WITH IMPLEMENTATION DEVOLVED TO THE NATION-STATES ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY. THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF THIS, HE ADMITTED,

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WOULD BE TO ENSHRINE THE PRIVILEGES AND RIGHTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN COUNTRIES WHERE CONCORDATS PROVIDE FOR THEM, AND ALSO FOR THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN COUNTRIES WHERE IT

PREDOMINATES.

17. (SBU) BALESTRERO ALSO NOTED A MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE HOLY SEE'S ROLE IN THIS DEBATE: THE IDEA FOR LANGUAGE IN THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION ACKNOWLEDGING CHRISTIANITY WAS DEVELOPED BY A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES (CEC - A PROTESTANT GROUP). ONLY LATER DID THE HOLY SEE (AND GREEK ORTHODOX) JOIN THEIR VOICES TO IT. THE HOLY SEE, BALESTRERO CONTINUED, VIEWS THIS LANGUAGE AS ENHANCING THE IMPORTANCE OF ALL RELIGIONS IN EUROPE'S DAILY LIFE.

A CHRISTIAN HERITAGE BUT ROOM FOR ALL

18. (SBU) CHALLENGED ON THE UNDENIABLE CONTRIBUTION TO EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION FROM A JEWISH PRESENCE THAT PREDATES THE CHRISTIAN ONE, AND THE HALF-MILLENNIUM LONG ISLAMIC CONTROL OF IBERIA AND THE BALKANS, BALESTRERO SAID THE HOLY SEE DOES NOT DENY THESE INFLUENCES, THOUGH THEY REGARD THE CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE AS HISTORICALLY PREDOMINANT. MOREOVER, THE HOLY SEE IS A CHRISTIAN ENTITY AND IS PUSHING FOR ITS CHRISTIAN INTERESTS; IT HAS NO OBJECTION TO ANYONE ELSE SEEKING TO INTERJECT LANGUAGE ON CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OTHER SOURCES. HE SAID THE HOLY SEE HAD RECENTLY SHARED A TEXT OF PROPOSED LANGUAGE WITH JEWISH LEADERS, WHO SUPPORTED IT. MORE RECENTLY, DURING A VATICAN RADIO DISCUSSION ON THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION, EUROPEAN PEOPLES PARTY PRESIDENT,
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WILFRED MARTENS, NOTED THAT THE POPE IS PUSHING FOR LANGUAGE SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE POLISH CONSTITUTION TO THE EFFECT THAT JUDEO-CHRISTIAN NOTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE CAN BE ARRIVED AT FROM BELIEF IN GOD OR OTHER SOURCES.

19. (U) THE POPE HIMSELF, WHILE AFFIRMING THE IMPORTANCE OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITY RECOGNITION OF THE CONTINENT'S CHRISTIAN HERITAGE, CAUTIONED IN A SEPTEMBER 13 ADDRESS THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMON EUROPEAN IDENTITY SHOULD NOT BE USED AS AN EXCUSE FOR HOSTILITY TOWARDS MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES. HE ARGUED AGAINST ANY TENDENCY TOWARD "ISOLATION FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD."

ALSO ROOM FOR TURKEY

110. (SBU) WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT THE PLACE OF TURKEY IN A NEW EUROPE AND THE FALLOUT FROM GISCARD D'ESTAING'S MEETING WITH THE POPE (RFTL B), BALESTRERO SAID GISCARD D'ESTAING'S VIES WERE NOT THOSE OF THE HOLY SEE. THE HOLY SEE HAS NO OBJECTION TO TURKISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE EU, BUT HAS NO ROLE IN DECIDING THAT MEMBERSHIP. ACCORDING TO BALESTRERO, THE HOLY SEE IS PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE

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ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DS-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01
	VCE-00	NSAE-00	TEST-00	EPAE-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02
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RECENT TURKISH ELECTIONS, AND VIEWS IN TURKEY A SECULAR STATE THAT COULD MAKE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO A LARGER EU, NOT AS AN ISLAMIC THREAT TO EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION. MOREOVER, THE HOLY SEE SEES TURKEY AS A MODERATE,
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MODERNIZING, SECULAR STATE THAT CAN HELP BRING MODERATION TO THE ISLAMIC WORLD -- A CURRENT PREOCCUPATION OF THE HOLY

SEE. IN FACT, CARDINAL ACHILLE SILVESTRINI, PREFECT OF THE CONGREGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH EASTERN CHURCHES, IN AN INTERVIEW FOLLOWING THE TURKISH ELECTION RESULTS EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF DIALOGUE WITH TURKEY AND CAUTIONED AGAINST VIEWING ISLAM "PURELY IN ITS AGGRESSIVE AND FUNDAMENTALIST COMPONENT" RATHER THAN "A RELIGION CAPABLE OF TOLERANCE."

COMMENT

11. (SBU) GISCARD D'ESTAING'S DECISION TO LAUNCH HIS BROADSIDE AGAINST TURKISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE EU SHORTLY AFTER HIS MEETING WITH THE POPE HAS UNNECESSARILY LED MANY TO VIEW THE HOLY SEE AS INVOLVED IN WHAT IS A PURELY EUROPEAN DOGFIGHT. AT NO TIME IN ANY OF OUR DISCUSSIONS OF THE HOLY SEE'S LONGSTANDING CONCERNS ABOUT THE SHAPE OF THE FUTURE EU CONSTITUTION HAS TURKEY'S EU MEMBERSHIP EVER ARISEN. THE HOLY SEE'S INTERESTS -- BOTH IN IMBEDDING REFERENCES TO KEY VALUES AND ENSURING JURIDICAL PROTECTIONS -- PREDATE CURRENT DISCUSSIONS ABOUT TURKEY'S PLACE IN EUROPE. TO BE SURE, THERE ARE MANY CATHOLIC INTELLECTUALS, SUCH AS ITALIAN MINISTER FOR EU AFFAIRS, ROCCO BUTTIGLIONE, WHO QUESTION WHETHER A MUSLIM TURKEY SHARES EUROPE'S VALUE SYSTEM, WHICH THEY REGARD AS DERIVED FROM JUDEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS. BUT EVEN BUTTIGLIONE IN A RECENT SPEECH HERE LEFT OPEN THE DOOR THAT TURKEY COULD OVERCOME THESE DOUBTS BY BETTER PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND STRENGTHENING ITS DEMOCRACY. NEVERTHELESS, THE HOLY SEE REGARDS ITS CHALLENGE NOT AS ONE OF KEEPING THE
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MUSLIM INFLUENCE OUT OF EUROPE, BUT OF REINVIGORATING ITS CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES. AS THE POPE TOLD THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT, HE WANTS TO ENSURE THAT "THE NEW FOUNDATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN 'COMMON HOUSE' WILL NOT LACK THE 'CEMENT' OF THAT EXTRAORDINARY RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL AND CIVIL PATRIMONY WHICH HAS GIVEN EUROPE ITS GREATNESS DOWN THE CENTURIES."

NICHOLSON

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